

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of December 8, 2015**

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Chair John Quinn III (7:10 p.m.), Vice-Chair K. David Maxwell, Selectmen Lynn Doney, Matthew Gadbois, and Kenneth W. Goslant. Also present were Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Finance Director Laurie Baroffio, Highway Foreman Ray Hudson, Nate Freeman (Northfield Business & Professional Association), Karl Bailey (Northfield Highway Department), Sally Davidson, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

As Chair Quinn had been slightly delayed, Acting Chair Maxwell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

- III. **SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** Manager Schulz had no changes to the posted agenda.

- IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):**

- a. **Nate Freeman: Northfield Business & Professional Association (NBPA).** Mr. Freeman stated that due to a recent rash of businesses closing down or relocating out of Northfield, he and other local business owners felt that it might be a good time to restart the NBPA, which had been formed in 1978 but became inactive in 2006. Mr. Freeman tried to gauge local interest by raising this possibility first on the Front Porch Forum. When there was positive feedback, an initial meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, December 2, 2015. Fourteen (14) residents attended that were a mix of business owners and those who were generally interested in local economic development. Mr. Freeman noted that of the Vermont communities hardest hit by Tropical Storm Irene in August 2011, the ones that recovered the best afterwards (i.e., Waterbury, Barre, etc.) had thriving organizations comprised of local business leaders. These non-profit organizations, commonly known as Public-Private Partnerships (P3), can access grant opportunities from sources not open to local municipalities. These funds can be used to bring additional businesses into town, provide assistance for existing businesses, etc. The NBPA also could work with the local municipal government to create a pro-business atmosphere in Northfield. Since the initial meeting's attendees were enthusiastic about these possibilities, a second meeting has been scheduled for mid-January 2016. Mr. Freeman is not requesting anything from the Select Board members tonight other than their general support. He then asked if there were any questions.

Manager Schulz asked how often the NBPA would hold its meetings. Mr. Freeman believes that at first it would be good to hold monthly get-togethers that would include both a social component as well as discussions of local business concerns, etc.

Chair Quinn arrived at this time.

Manager Schulz asked what kind of structure the new NBPA would have; for example, would there be elected officers? Mr. Freeman stated that this still needed to be decided. He did not foresee a rigid organizational structure at first while the NBPA is still trying to determine its proper role and purpose in the community, etc. Selectman Maxwell asked if there had been any outreach to GO! Northfield. Mr. Freeman said that this would happen soon as both organizations intended to promote Northfield as a good place to live and to do business. The Northfield Rotary Club and Norwich University would be contacted as they also have a stake in local economic development.

Selectman Gadbois attended the initial meeting as a business owner (Gadbois Plumbing & Heating) and agreed with Mr. Freeman that it was a diverse group of business owners but also residents who were interested in promoting local economic development. Selectman Maxwell noted that Mr. Freeman attended the last meeting of the Economic Development Committee and his plans were encouraged. As previously stated, a P3 organization can apply for certain state funds that the municipality cannot. Selectman Goslant felt that this was a very positive development for the community and also encouraged Mr. Freeman's efforts. The other Selectmen echoed these sentiments and thanked Mr. Freeman for his presentation.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **November 24, 2015 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-2, with Selectmen Doney and Quinn abstaining.**

VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #12-16.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #12-16 in the amount of \$1,465,892.95. Chair Quinn pointed out that of this total amount, \$1,051,000 represented property taxes collected by the Town and then forwarded to the Northfield School District. Selectman Goslant noticed a payment to replace damaged guardrails that was paid for out of Highway CIP funds. He asked if there would be reimbursement for this. Manager Schulz confirmed that the driver's automobile insurance would compensate the Town. Selectman Maxwell asked if there would be any more payments for the completed water projects. Manager Schulz said that all payments had been made for the Central Street project but there is one final payment for the King Street project. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through November 22, 2015.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$86,895.89. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **FY 2016/2017 Municipal Budget.** Manager Schulz stated that at the first two budget meetings (12/03/15 and 12/07/15), there had been a general overview of the proposed budget for fiscal year 2016/2017. The next step is to have the various department heads address the Select Board members and answer questions regarding the proposed budgets for their departments. Highway Foreman Ray Hudson is present tonight for this purpose.

Mr. Hudson stated that normal road maintenance is the main focus for the next fiscal year. The chloride budget has been increased in order to combine road salt with Ice B'Gone™ in order cut down on salt consumption. Since the price of road salt has increased dramatically in recent years, many communities have tried this and found it a very cost-effective solution. Selectman Gadbois asked what would be the effect of this mixture. Mr. Hudson said it gives the road salt an oatmeal-like consistency so it stays on the road longer.

In addition, Mr. Hudson stated that the Highway Department would no longer put calcium chloride on the dirt roads but would use magnesium chloride instead. This should require less road grading during the summer, which saves on fuel use, grader blade purchases, and frees up the truck operator for other tasks. There will be increases in the budget for the purchase of road sand and gravel, which reflects the increased costs of these materials.

Mr. Hudson noted that the 2005 Mack truck is due for replacement this year. It was kept in service one year later than originally planned but now is in poor condition with decreasing trade-in value. In addition, Mr. Hudson would like to put about \$4000 in the part-time employee account so that a summer employee could be hired next year to mow the municipal properties, etc. In recent years, this has been done by a full-time Highway operator and this takes him away from vital road maintenance work. Mr. Hudson believes it would be more cost-effective to hire a temporary employee without benefits to take care of this from the beginning of June through the end of August.

Selectman Maxwell asked why the chloride budget was increased by \$10,000. Mr. Hudson stated that he would like to purchase the magnesium chloride in bulk in order to treat the backroads on a regular basis. As indicated earlier, the goal is to cut down the number of times the dirt roads need to be graded each year and is part of a long-term road stabilization program. Selectman Maxwell asked if there is any proof that this will work. Mr. Hudson said that he spoke to highway supervisors from various Vermont communities and they all were very positive about the results. Selectman Maxwell would like to see some tangible evidence that it will work here before the program is expanded in future years.

As there were no further questions or comments, Chair Quinn thanked Mr. Hudson for his presentation and for the good work done by him and his operators.

- b. **Capital Expense Note (2013 Ford F350 One Ton Truck).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve and sign the Capital Expense Note for the 2013 Ford F350 One Ton Truck in the amount of \$42,799 at 1.24% interest; to approve and sign the Capital Expense Borrowing resolution; and to approve and sign the No Arbitrage and Use of Proceeds Certificate. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **FY 2016/2017 Municipal Budget Process Update.** Chair Quinn asked if the Select Board members had any general thoughts on the process to this point. Selectman Maxwell believes that there are some areas in the proposed budgets that could be reduced but would like to hear from more of the department heads before any firm decisions are made.

Selectman Gadbois noted that the proposed budget calls for a 4.7% increase in expenditures and a 2.2% increase in revenues (other than property taxes). He would like to see this gap reduced so that Northfield taxpayers are not overburdened. Selectman Goslant would like the various departmental budgets level-funded as much as possible. He does not believe that similar budget cuts in recent years have had adverse effects on the community. Chair Quinn stated that the budgets should clearly demonstrate what the Select Board members envision as the municipality's priorities in the next fiscal year.
- b. **December 2015 Meeting Schedule.** Due to its closeness to the Christmas holiday, Chair Quinn would like to cancel the next regular meeting scheduled for Tuesday, December 22, 2015. There was no objection. The next budget meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, December 15, 2015, at 6:00 p.m. in the Community Room.

IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT. Manager Schulz had nothing to add to his written report.

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. **Kathleen Lott: Firearm Storage at the Northfield Police Station.** Ms. Lott has heard a rumor that Norwich University (NU) has adopted a zero tolerance policy regarding its students keeping private firearms on campus. Therefore, NU students are being asked to have their weapons stored at the Northfield Police Station. Manager Schulz stated that there have been some discussions on this but they are only in the preliminary stages. Chair Quinn said that the Select Board members have heard nothing about this proposal. He felt that this indicates that there still needs to be some improvement in communication between the Select Board and the Northfield Police Department. Selectman Goslant asked if NU was planning to compensate the Town for this service. Manager Schulz said it was not. Selectman Goslant would like more discussion of this matter at a future meeting.

XI. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the regular Select Board meeting of January 12, 2016.